

# **WHATCOM COUNTY WATER RECREATION FACILITY PROCEDURE MANUAL**

(For purposes of this document, "Health Officer" is defined as the health officer of Whatcom County Health Department or a representative authorized by the health officer.)

## **INSPECTIONS**

Inspections of water recreation facilities are performed by the Health Officer as often as is necessary for the enforcement of the regulations (Chapter 246-260 WAC).

When an inspection of a water recreation facility is conducted, the findings shall be recorded on the Water Recreation Facility Inspection Form. A copy of the completed inspection report form shall be furnished to the pool operator or person in charge of the water recreation facility at the conclusion of the inspection and shall constitute legal notice.

## **INSPECTION REPORT INTERPRETATION**

The inspection report form summarizes the requirements of Chapter 246-260 WAC (formerly Chapter 248-98 WAC).

Violations are written on the inspection report form. There are two sections in which violations can be written. Part 1, the red section, relates directly to the protection of the public. These items must have immediate corrective action and can be cause for closure. Part 2, the black section, are items to be corrected by the next regular inspection or compliance schedule noted.

## **INSPECTION FREQUENCY**

Routine inspection scheduling can be adjusted and prioritized based on use assessment and compliance of the facility (based on previous inspections). Therefore, a pool that receives low usage may not get as many inspections as one that receives high usage. Similarly, a pool that has repeated red critical violations may have more frequent inspections than a pool that has a history of compliance.

Each permitted pool facility will get at least one inspection conducted by the Health Officer each calendar year.

## **THE FOLLOWING ARE GUIDELINES TO CORRECTIVE ACTION:**

Please note that all corrective action is under the Health Officer's discretion.

## **CRITICAL VIOLATIONS:**

For the purposes of these guidelines, violations that can be cause for immediate closure are related to:

- Disinfectant levels, too high or too low
- pH
- Clarity
- Temperature
- Barriers
- Main drain
- Other imminent health hazards
- Repeat violations

### **I. DISINFECTION LEVELS (01)**

Chlorine levels mean free chlorine residual levels. Stabilized chlorine means a pool water using chlorine with cyanuric acid or any of its derivatives used in organic forms of chlorine such as dichlor or trichlor. Bromine means total bromine residual levels. All disinfectant levels are in parts per million (ppm). For the purposes of this document, < means less than or equal to.

#### **Low Disinfectant Levels for Spa Pools**

ph Level	Type of Disinfectant	Closure (1*)	Low Level Noted
7.2 - 7.49	Chlorine	< 1.0	1.1 - 2.5
	Stabilized Chlorine	< 1.2	1.3 - 3.0
	Bromine	< 1.4	1.5 - 3.5
7.5 - 7.79	Chlorine	< 1.2	1.3 - 2.9
	Stabilized Chlorine	< 1.4	1.5 - 3.5
	Bromine	< 1.6	1.7 - 4.0
7.8 - 8.0	Chlorine	< 1.3	1.4 - 3.3
	Stabilized Chlorine	< 1.7	1.8 - 4.3
	Bromine	< 2.0	2.1 - 5.0

(1\*) Closure - The spa pool is closed by the Health Officer and re-opened by either the Health Officer or pool operator depending on the circumstances.

"Low Level Noted" - An immediate correction is needed. The low disinfectant level will be noted on the inspection report form as a violation.

#### Low Disinfectant Levels for Swimming and Wading Pools (01)

pH Level	Type of Disinfectant	Closure (1*)	Low Level Noted
7.2 - 7.49	Chlorine	< 0.4	0.5 - 1.0
	Stabilized Chlorine	< 0.6	0.7 - 1.5
	Bromine	< 0.8	0.9 - 2.0
7.5 - 7.79	Chlorine	< 0.6	0.7 - 1.4
	Stabilized Chlorine	< 0.8	0.9 - 2.0
	Bromine	< 1.0	1.1 - 2.5
7.8 - 8.0	Chlorine	< 0.8	0.9 - 1.8
	Stabilized Chlorine	< 1.0	1.1 - 2.8
	Bromine	< 1.4	1.5 - 3.5

(1\*) Closure: The pool is closed by the Health Officer and re-opened by either the Health Officer or the pool operator depending on the circumstances.

"Low Level Noted" - An immediate correction is needed. The low disinfectant level will be noted on the inspection report form as a violation.

#### No Measurable Amount of Disinfectant in the Pool

If there is no measurable amount of disinfectant in a spa, swimming, or wading pool, closure.

The pool operator may re-open the pool under the Health Officer's discretion. The Health Officer will make an effort to do a follow-up inspection of the pool within 7 days to assess the disinfectant level. At this time, if the disinfectant level falls under the closure column in the above tables for minimum disinfectant levels, the pool will be closed, a re-inspection fee will be required, and the Health Officer will need to re-open the pool.

#### High Levels of Disinfectants for Water Recreation Facilities

(For purposes of this document, > means greater than or equal to, and < means less than or equal to.)

The maximum level of disinfectant for swimming, wading, and spray pools is 6.0 ppm.

If disinfectant levels are >6.0 and <10.5 ppm, high level is noted on the inspection form and immediate correction is needed.

If disinfectant level is >10.6 ppm, closure.

The maximum level of disinfectant for a spa pool is 10 ppm.

If disinfectant levels are 11 ppm, high level is noted on inspection form.

If disinfectant levels are 12.0, immediate correction is needed.

If disinfectant levels are 13 or above, closure.

## II. pH LEVELS (02)

pH levels in all pools must be maintained between 7.2 and 8.0 and within the range of the test kit being used at the facility.

If the pH level is 6.9 - 7.1, low level is noted on inspection form as a violation and immediate correction is needed.

If the pH level is 8.1, high level is noted on inspection form as a violation and immediate correction is needed.

If the pH level is <6.8 or >8.1, closure.

## III. CLARITY (04)

If the main drain grate or the bottom of the pool cannot be easily seen due to turbidity, closure. The operator must report back to the Health Officer what corrective action was taken to fix the problem. The pool operator may re-open the pool under the Health Officer's discretion. The Health Officer will make an effort to do a follow-up inspection of the pool within 7 days to assess the water clarity.

If at this time the drain grate or the bottom of the pool cannot be easily seen, the pool will be closed, a re-inspection fee will be required, and the Health Officer will need to re-open the pool.

If the main drain grate or the bottom of the pool cannot be seen at all, closure. The Health Officer will need to re-open the pool and a fee required for the inspection.

If the pool is cloudy and the main drain grate and the bottom of the pool can be seen, recommend closure to prevent more cloudy conditions during use.

## IV. TEMPERATURE (05)

The temperature in any pool must not be greater than 104 degrees Fahrenheit.

If the temperature is 105°F, note the temperature is high on the inspection report form as a violation and immediate correction is needed.

If the temperature is >106°F, closure. The pool operator may re-open the pool under the Health Officer's discretion. The Health Officer will make an effort to do a follow-up inspection of the pool.

within 7 days to access the temperature. If at that time, the temperature is above 104°F, the pool will be closed, a re-inspection fee will be required, and the Health Officer will need to re-open the pool.

If the temperature is 110°F or higher, closure. The Health Officer will need to re-open the pool and a fee required for the inspection.

#### V. BARRIERS (08)

All entrances to water recreation facilities need to be self-closing and self-latching unless there is a lifeguard on duty to supervise bather safety.

If an entrance to the pool is **not self-closing and self-latching**, instruct the pool operator to lock the entrance until the violation is corrected.

If this is the only entrance to the pool, the pool is closed. The pool operator may re-open the pool under the Health Officer's discretion.

The Health Officer will make an effort to do a follow-up inspection of the pool within 7 days to access the condition of the barrier. If at this time, the entrance does not self-close and self-latch, instruct the operator to lock the entrance, a reinspection fee will be required, and the Health Officer will need to verify the entrance is self-closing and self-latching before it is opened again.

If an entrance to the pool is **self-closing but not self-latching**, the pool operator will need to correct the problem that day. The Health Officer may make an effort to do a follow-up inspection of the pool within 7 days to access the condition of the barrier. If at this time, the barrier is not self-latching (or not self-closing), instruct the pool operator to lock the entrance until the violation is corrected.

#### VI. MAIN DRAIN (09)

There must be a secure grate/cover over the main drain in any pool. If the grate/cover is missing, closure. The Health Officer will need to re-open the pool and a fee required for the additional inspection.

If the grate/cover is insecure, Health Authority discretion. If it is easily removable, closure and fee required for additional inspection if it cannot be secured during the inspection.

#### VII. OTHER IMMINENT HEALTH HAZARDS

If an imminent health hazard exists at a pool facility during an inspection or otherwise and the pool is open for use, the Health Officer will instruct the facility owner/operator to close the facility until the problem is rectified. A fee will be required for an additional inspection when verification of corrective action is necessary. Some examples of imminent health hazards include:

- ❖ No electricity
- ❖ Diving board is not properly secured 13
- ❖ Circulation system (pump and/or filter) is not working properly 17
- ❖ No required lifeguard or proper supervision present and use cannot be controlled 50
- ❖ Emergency response equipment not present or not operable (telephone, alarm, rescue

- equipment, etc.) 42, 43, and 44
- ❖ Potential or actual sewage contamination to pool or deck (such as sewage back-up on the pool deck).

Also, if there are on-going violations that pose a health/safety risk to the public, the Health Officer may suspend the operating permit until the problem is corrected. Some examples include:

- ❖ The pool surface or decking being rough, uneven, not smooth which would pose a safety hazard to the users 07, 33
- ❖ The area of the pool is not well lighted 26

## VIII. CLOSURE

For critical red violations that warrant pool closure, the pool operator or Health Officer must close the pool by locking the entrance or posting a sign at the pool. The public must not have access to the pool until the problem is rectified and the pool is re-opened by either the Health Officer or the pool operator depending on the circumstances.

If the pool is closed on a routine inspection, the pool operator may re-open the pool under the Health Officer's discretion (If there is no main drain grate, the Health Officer must re-open the pool).

If the pool is closed on a follow-up inspection, the Health Officer will need to re-open the pool and a re-inspection fee will be required.

## CLOSURE FOLLOW-UP

If a serious red critical violation exists on a routine inspection, (01 no disinfectant; 04 clarity; 05 temperature; 08 barriers; 09 main drain; 38 required personnel present; 42, 43, 44 emergency response equipment provided; 50 supervision; 55 pool properly secured during non-use periods), the pool may be closed and a follow-up inspection may be conducted.

During a follow-up inspection, if a repeat red violation occurs, the pool will be closed, a re-inspection fee will be required, and the Health Officer will need to re-open the pool. The pool operator will be asked to propose a plan in writing that would be implemented at the facility to prevent the violation from happening again.

Please refer to the Pool Program Flowchart for Critical Violations.

In order to correct a water quality problem at a swimming pool, the chemicals added by the operator may take a while to circulate so that they are distributed throughout the pool. This may take as long as several hours. Therefore, in order to re-open a swimming pool, the Health Officer may need to come back at a later time. The re-inspection fee would be used toward this re-inspection.

Spa pools on the other hand may not take as long for correction of water quality problems. Chemicals added by the operator may take minutes to circulate throughout the spa pool and the Health Officer may be able to re-open the spa pool during the same inspection.

Given the temperature and the bathers per volume are usually much higher in spa pools than swimming pools, the spa pool environment may better support and promote the survival/growth of pathogens. Therefore, the re-inspection fee may be applied towards an additional inspection for compliance.

If continued repeat critical violations are found on following inspections, it will be under the Health Officer's discretion of appropriate action.

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